MAT-SU MONITOR
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA COLLEGE
October 2009

Mat-Su College Begins Vet Assistant Program

PHOTOGRAPH: Dr. Sandi Farris is assisted by Alys Culhane as she pulls Siggi's wolf teeth. Culhane is a frequent student in Farris's Vet Asssting classes.

By Linda Cordle
Special to the Mat-Su Monitor

What does Mat-Su College have that the main campuses of Anchorage, Fairbanks and Southeast don't have? Don't know? Hint: Bow wow…. Still don't know? We are the only college in the State of Alaska that offers a Veterinary Assisting program. Yes, right here at Mat-Su College! The interest is so great, the first classes, which started this fall, were quickly full and the admissions office has had to turn potential students away.

Over the past few years, the general public's interest in a vet assisting program has been enormous. Mat-Su College administrators, instructors, and many of the Valley's veterinarians and licensed vet techs took note of this and got on board to form a steering committee. The approval process for a new academic program takes quite awhile according to Dr. Kristin Owens, MSC Assistant Director; usually from six months to a year or more. The college, in the recent past, offered a few trial classes under the agricultural department to explore the feasibility of the classes and to test the market. With the success of the trial classes, the college decided there was enough interest to go forward with a vet assisting program.

With this fall's semester, the first official classes were offered. The program starts off with an overview of the vet's office with Introduction to the Veterinary Profession, a one credit class and Veterinary Office Procedures, a three credit class. Then follows an animal anatomy and physiology class. Also included are separate classes in handling, behavior and understanding of small animals and classes offering the same instruction but with larger animals. The student taking this program will learn about clinical procedures in the lab and x-ray, and how anesthesia, surgery, dentistry, nursing and pharmacology procedures are performed in the vet's office.» See Vet Assistant **PG. 11**

Hundreds of People Delivered Cooked Thanksgiving Meals

By Bryce Hyslip Mat-su Monitor

Thanksgiving is a time to be grateful; but for some people it may be a reminder of everything they have lost. A local church is doing something to help, Wasilla Assembly of God, has continued their annual Thanksgiving outreach this year through their Adopt-A-Block program designed to adopt a neighborhood and its people. This year the outreach was as big as ever, delivering fully cooked Thanksgiving dinners to 47 families to feed about 200 people!

» See Thanksgiving Delivered, **PG. 5**

Homeless in Alaska?

By Ansel Bird Mat-Su Monitor

In January, 2009 4,623 Alaskans were homeless and at any given time there are, according to conservative estimates, at least 3,000 homeless individuals in the state. Of those counted in January, 362 were in the Mat-Su Valley.

» See Homeless in the Valley, **PG. 3**

Letter to the editor

Letter regarding last issues "Potatoes A' Plenty" article

Dear Monitor editors,

Thank you for your recent edition of the Mat-Su Monitor, which I look forward to reading the few times a year it's published. The articles are timely, relevant, and can be thought-provoking. On occasion, I've also been humored by them, as happened today.

A case in point is the article by Andrew Loeb, entitled "Potatoes a' plenty," which covered a worthy community event that has great prospects for becoming an ongoing tradition. However, I was puzzled by the following statement towards the middle of the piece:

"The project was aimed to help the less fortunate of the community to have access to fresh produce when they otherwise wouldn't and it gave local produce a chance to procure some long overdue *notoriety.*" (emphasis mine)

It seems unlikely that the more unfortunate members of the community would be served well by providing anything that was *notorious,* especially food items. Last I checked, the definition of notoriety is (usually) that which is widely and *unfavorably* known. I could see giving local produce a chance to procure *popularity, estimation,* or even *honor,* but not notoriety. If the potatoes were improperly packaged, preserved, or cooked, then yes, they could earn the negative descriptor "notorious," but I hope that will not become a reality.

Meanwhile, here's hoping we all get to enjoy some of this area's delicious, highly regarded spuds –

Eva Cohnen-Brown

Editor's response

Mat-Su Monitor Editor Traci Steele responds to Eva Cohnen-Brown's letter

Dear Ms. Cohnen-Brown

First of all, I would like to thank you for being a dedicated reader of our newspaper. It is not often that we receive a letter from one of our readers, so I was surprised when I found that you had written one to me. I apologize for the incorrect usage of notoriety in our last issue. As the managing editor, I should have caught that mistake, but I would like to thank you for catching it for me. Although it was improperly used, I was happy to read that it at least gave you a little chuckle when you read it. I hope that you and the rest of our community will continue to read and support the Mat-Su Monitor. If you or anyone else has any questions, concerns or comments, please feel free to write an email to the Mat-Su Monitor.

Sincerely,

Traci Steele

Managing Editor

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Mat-Su College Public Square

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January 29: Producing Renewable Hydrocarbons from Biomass
Andres Soria, UAF Palmer Research and Extension Center

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Mark Masteller, AK Director, Cascadia Region Green Building Council

March 26: Solar Hot Water in Alaska
Harvey Bowers, Agate Inn

April 30: Energy-Efficient Buildings
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Homeless in the valley Continued from cover

The numbers may not seem extreme to many people at first glance, but remember, Alaska has a relatively small population and actually has the tenth highest percentage of homeless in the nation. Below is the definition of homelessness according to U.S. Code.

United States Code Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter 1 defines general homelessness as:
(1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
(2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is
(A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
(B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
(C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

People who are homeless come from many different backgrounds and are suffering from homelessness for many different reasons. Many of us are aware that mental illness and drug or alcohol abuse can be contributors to homelessness, but many people find themselves homeless due to medical hardship, wages that are insufficient to sustain a stable housing situation for the family, moving to Alaska without a proper support network and finding too late they could not get started without the support of friends and family that are no longer close by, or even a string of poor or naive decisions. Domestic violence is also a major cause of homelessness. In a dangerous situation there is often not time or means to arrange for a smooth transition to a new home or area and the process is only made harder and more urgent if children are a factor.

I talked to Laurie Kari, Program Director of Mat-Su Family Promise, a non-profit, interfaith organization that specializes in aiding homeless families with children. She told me that, in the Mat-Su Valley families are the largest homeless demographic. Mat-Su Family Promise is a national organization made up of local community networks that enlist the aid of churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious buildings to shelter homeless families. In the Mat-Su valley nine churches from several different denominations provide shelter along with volunteers who bring meals and stay the night in the church building to help the families with anything they may need and to provide supervision. Each church hosts all the families for a week at a time (the program can have about 3-5 families at any given time) and tries to provide most meals and volunteers during that time as well, though often volunteers from other churches are involved regardless of whose week it is. While they are in the program the families work with Family Promise to find employment, housing and transportation. The program is not designed as a permanent solution, but a way to make a smooth, more comfortable transition from homelessness to a stable situation. Many families have benefitted from Family Promise. However, the number of homeless is growing faster than Family Promise and other local groups can help. There is also little in the way of aid for homeless singles, teens and those without children. The nearest shelter is in Anchorage and it can be quite difficult to arrange transportation. Family Promise recently became a distributor of government funding and can offer limited monetary aid to homeless individuals who qualify, but the organization is not designed to provide physical aid to individuals and they have few shelter options in the valley.

"I awoke under what had been my carefully constructed cardboard hut to find myself lying in a puddle of ice water, fingers numb and shivering"

Family Promise, in addition to providing aid, also holds events to raise awareness about homelessness. Cardboard City is an annual event that takes place on the fairgrounds in late September. Participants are mostly volunteers, youth groups and often families who have graduated from the program. The idea is to do fund-raising in the community and pledge to spend the night in a cardboard shelter that you construct on site. The money goes to Family Promise to help continue operation. The event itself starts in the late afternoon and usually several radio stations are represented. The DJ's promote the event on air and takes donations. They give away prizes at the event and participate, usually spending the night in their own shelters. Live music, food and contests are also usual. The atmosphere is one of cooperation between individuals who care about their fellow Alaskans and though on the surface it is a lighthearted, fun activity, it is meant to raise awareness about the serious problem of homelessness in the Mat-Su Valley, the State and the Nation.

I was at Cardboard City 2009, and it rained steadily for almost the whole event yet it was still an enjoyable, fun experience. The weather did however, show many people, in ways that words cannot, just how exposed and vulnerable you really are as a homeless person. This was driven home to me personally when I awoke under what had been my carefully constructed cardboard hut to find myself lying in a puddle of ice water, fingers numb and shivering, my tent-mate having already long abandoned me for his car. Needless to say I quickly followed suit and considered the next morning's playful mockery a very good trade for warmth. That might be funny (or maybe it's just pathetic), but a person actually without a home can't just "go to the car", they can't even count on a regular meal, or a shower. What we consider basic needs are uncommon luxuries to some of these people. I can't even imagine what it might be like to spend a night outside in Alaska, in the dead of winter in sub zero conditions, yet these people manage to survive.

Though the problem is daunting there is hope. Since its establishment in 2005, Family Promise Mat-Su has graduated 200 Families from the program and has provided 6,000 nights of shelter. It has grown in its volunteer base, scope and number of member churches, but one organization, no matter how well put together can fix this problem. It will take the establishment of more organizations, better government funding, more affordable housing, cheaper public transportation and most importantly more community involvement. That means that if we want to end homelessness in the Valley we have to get involved. If you are interested in helping, Family Promise can always use another donation, another volunteer, another meal and right now, Laurie tells me they even need storage sheds. Ending homelessness in the Valley is only a small part of a much larger goal, but it is still a daunting task that will require the community as a whole, to show compassion. If you are interested in helping in any way you can find contact information by visiting their web site at: www.familypromisematsu.org.

Palmer plans to expand

By Ansel Bird

Mat-Su Monitor

Palmer it seems, is planning, or at least looking at the Idea of expanding its city limits. The City is considering the option of annexing neighboring areas and is trying to gauge public feeling on the idea. This would make sense to the City in several ways as they already provide utilities from the edge of Palmer to Trunk Road, well beyond the city limits. Another reason why Palmer finds annexation attractive is that the City is in need of room to expand and an annexation would give them that.

Palmer is also acquiring five acres of land from the college to build a new water tower and may even build new fire and police stations on the land at some time in the future.

An open house on the subject of Palmer's annexation strategy was held at the AT&T Sports Complex to inform the public and hear their opinions. People in the area that may be affected by Palmer's future decisions were invited to come and share their thoughts, concerns and ask any questions they had. The city representatives tried to make very clear that no formal proposal has been submitted to the city as of yet and the area to be annexed has not even been specified. The purpose of the meeting was simply to address people's concerns, answer their questions and gauge the public feelings towards a possible annexation for inclusion in a report that is currently in progress and will be submitted to the city. This is partially because after the city's failure in a similar annexation plan two years ago, due to public opposition. This time around, they are trying to better inform the public and demonstrate their willingness to work with locals to come up with a mutually beneficial and acceptable plan.

The public attitude at the open house ranged from opposed to favorable and some attendees just seemed curious and wanted information. Some of the most strongly felt and commonly held public concerns seemed to center around land usage. Many people seemed worried that annexation by Palmer would restrict what they can and cannot do with and on their property. These concerns included worries about restricted agricultural or farming practices, firearm regulation, stringent city building codes, building permits and other fees associated with practices that are currently under little or no regulation. Since no formal proposal has been made, nothing is yet definite, but the city representatives indicated that much current regulation would be changed, or added to, in an attempt to cater to any more rural areas that might be annexed. These changes would include much more flexibility on noise, animal, smell and building regulations, some of which would be rewritten or heavily revised.

People were also concerned about property taxes and were told that these would, remain largely the same since the tax is based on property value, however the possibility exists that the value of property itself would go up with annexation which would of course cause a tax increase. Palmer would also extend its 3% sales tax to the new area, though it was mentioned that this might be waived for farmers markets. Other small fees that are already in effect in the City might also be applied to the new area such as refuse collection fees and others.

Some of the benefits of annexation for people would be superior winter road plowing, entitlement to city police and fire services, but most significantly, representation in the city of Palmer. This would allow residents of the annexed area to run for public office and vote in Palmer, giving them more say in decisions that already affect them now. The city's motivation for annexation is fairly straightforward, more land means more resources, but most importantly room to grow. People were told that the area is going to be built up no matter what. The main choice residents have will be who they want to guide that growth. "Annexation is a response to growth, not a cause of growth." Read a poster at one information table.

Palmer is also acquiring five acres of unused land from the Mat-Su College. The land itself is worth about $300,000.00, but instead of just purchasing the land they are going to build the college a new access road to the Trunk Road project that is currently in progress. I spoke with Dennis Clark, Director of Mat-Su College who gave me a lot of valuable information on this topic and said that this project would cost the school approximately $1,000,000.00 for the college to build, that the college is generally in favor of the plan and is not currently using the land that would be transferred.

In the first year after acquisition Palmer will use the land to build a water tower that will hold one million gallons and will be used to provide a good water supply to the surrounding subdivisions. Palmer may later construct new police and fire departments, but this would probably depend upon whether or not they end up choosing to annex new areas.

Palmer seems generally to be demonstrating a willingness to work with residents to provide the benefits that annexation brings while, as much as possible, preserving the current level of low regulation and flexibility that property owners currently have in the area. However, inclusion in the city will require the two areas to be compatible in regulation and so some compromise would be necessary along with the correct application of zoning. It still remains to be seen if residents, property owners and local businesses, will be more favorable to the idea than they were two years ago.

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Thanksgiving delivered

Continued from cover

The outreach began months before Thanksgiving with dozens of hours of planning and preparation. Three weeks before Thanksgiving Day a group of people went into the Willawaw subdivision leaving door hangers informing residents that they would be coming back through the following week to ask them if they would be needing a dinner on Thanksgiving Day. The next week they did just that and signed up 40 families for a dinner. By time Thanksgiving Day had rolled around there were 47 families that had been signed up or had called the church to ask for a dinner. On Thanksgiving Day volunteers began showing up to the church with their Turkey dinners prepared. One volunteer had been working since 3 O'clock AM to get her six turkeys cooked on time. This was the final test to see if the planning and preparation would succeed at keeping over 47 dinners separated and then successfully routed to the right home. Things looked good, as every last dinner was hot and ready to go.

So began the journey to the homes. Volunteers received maps with directions to their specific home or homes and phone numbers in case they got lost. Volunteers, myself included, brought the dinner to the house and knocked on the door. Volunteers were usually met with great excitement and smiles and were often invited in to the house for a round of hugs and thanks. Volunteers offered encouragement, hope, prayer, and just showed them love. It wasn't unusual to see tears, as some families would have been without thanksgiving if it weren't for the generosity of the volunteers. The gratefulness was overwhelming as some people shared what they had been going through and the despair they had felt. Some of the people who received the meals were simply too old to cook a Thanksgiving feast, and some were too tight on cash; but others had more heart wrenching stories as family members had been killed or single parents trying to raise a family.

The church was excited to have made this year their most successful outreach yet, and are looking forward to next year being even better; but they have many outreaches planned for the area before next Thanksgiving roles around. The church has made a commitment to "adopt that block" with annual outreaches including giving brand new free coats to children, and new shoes. In the past they have given children new bicycles and backpacks, but most importantly they give hope to the people in the subdivision, "It's all about showing them love" as the senior pastor Ed Kalnins said on the day of the outreach.

The church has been going into the Willawaw subdivision for about five years now and a significant improvement has been seen in the area. It really goes to show how far a little hope, help, and love can go.

Thanksgiving basket tradition continues

By Bradley Scott Lucas
Special to the Mat-Su Monitor

Every fall, Dr. Ping-Tung Chang (better known as P.T.) and the Math Club collect donations of food items and money which are used to compile Thanksgiving Baskets. These baskets are handed out to families which are nominated by Math Club members. This fall is slightly different, however, as P.T. is away in China on sabbatical. Nevertheless, the Math Club decided to carry on the tradition in P.T.'s absence with the aid of three other organizations: the Mat-Su Campus Lions Club, Student Government, and the Educational Opportunity Center. The Lions Club held a bake sale earlier this semester which successfully raised one hundred and twenty-seven dollars, all of which was put toward the Thanksgiving Baskets. Since then, the Lions Club has aided much in the preparation of the baskets. Student Government and the Educational Opportunity Center have also been a great help by donating food, money, and time. The Math Club has also contributed greatly to the completion of this project, by contributing funds, co-directing the project with the Lions Club, and by volunteering time and manpower to aid in the completion of this project. As of now, these organizations are still collecting food donations for the baskets, and a collection box has been placed in the FSM lobby to this end. Also, some local retailers which have generally donated in the past are being asked to donate this semester as well. Even though P.T. is unable to be here this semester for the preparation of the Thanksgiving Baskets, the event is shaping up to be very successful.

Members of the Mat-Su College Math Club Mat-Su Campus Lions Club, Student Government, and the Educational Opportunity Center.

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Twenty years in the making

By Jennifer Olah Special to the Mat-su Monitor

What! There's new furniture at Mat-Su College? After years of sitting on dull, under stuffed, heavily stained furniture that we all felt was sure to be disease infested; we have new furniture? That's right; it has been 20 years since Mat-Su College has had new furniture. According to MSC's administrative assistant, Linda Meyers-Steele, the college has wanted to purchase new furniture for years, but the budget was too tight; however, this year funding was available. After visiting several Alaskan campuses to see how they were designed, Linda felt that the sleek and modern style she found there would also improve the appearance of our campus. Furthermore, she felt that choosing fabrics with a variety of patterns and colors would ensure that the college could, at some time in the future, add to the collection without worrying about matching exact fabric. Linda was able to purchase the new benches and tables from Northwood Designs, a local company located in Palmer. The chairs were ordered from a manufacturer's representative in Anchorage.

Linda says, "These chairs and benches were designed for sitting, studying, and to give students a comfortable place for holding conversations." Linda is very happy to see that Mat-Su college students are able to enjoy the new furniture, and hopes that they find the new chairs to be much more comfortable than the old ones. She hopes that the student will continue to use the chairs for years to come. Her only concern seemed to be that students need to remember that the chairs are made of fabric, so dirty shoes and improper use can cause the fabric to become damaged. Since we have waited for 20 years to get this furniture, it may be a good idea for students to treat the new furniture well.

Students on campus seem to have mixed feelings about the new furniture. Barb says, "I like the new furniture, and it seems to be placed in the appropriate places. I like that there are places to sit by the Student Services Center." However other students felt differently, as in the case of Jeremiah, who said, "I sat on one of the benches once, and I found it to be uncomfortable because it doesn't have a back on it." Other students like Andrea say that, "It's new? This is my first year, so I didn't know it was new." Overall many of the other student interviewed expressed that they liked the new colors and were happy that they did not have to sit on dirty old furniture anymore. There were also those who said that they had wished that the decision regarding the style of the new furniture had been put before students to vote upon.

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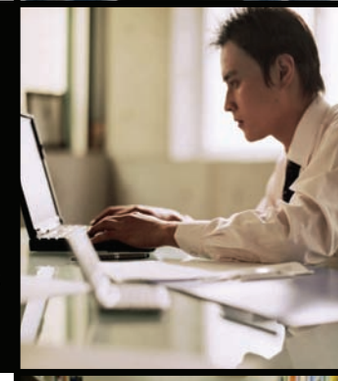

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College has new club

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Faculty focus

A Look into the Life of Judy Gette

By: Traci Steele Mat-Su Monitor

During my experience at college, I have found few students that were excited to go to class because of their professor. However, there are some exceptions to the rule; one of these exceptions is our Adjunct Professor of Psychology, Judy Gette. Her sense of humor, life stories and creative teaching style is a breath of fresh air to our college.

I first met Judy Gette at the start of the 2010 Fall Semester here at Mat-Su College. Her Human Relations class was filled with unfamiliar faces and the vibe was very uncomfortable. Yet, by the end of her first class, the atmosphere had changed from uncomfortable to exciting, and the mood had become relaxed and friendly. Gette started out with playing an ice breaker game called "Two truths and a Lie." By the end of the class period, I had felt like I knew a little about each of my fellow classmates and who they were in their non-academic lives. Judy Gette's Human Relations class was a great way to start this semester.

I chose to interview Ms. Gette to find out what she was all about, and to my surprise, she was much more than just a teacher. She explained to me that she is retired after she worked for twenty years as a probation officer, and she is currently the Director of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program as well as the Batterers Intervention Program at Alaska Family Services. After hearing this, I had to know how she could keep such a light attitude and great sense of humor when she comes to MSC to teach. She replied "I think in my field of work if you don't have a sense of humor, you won't survive." She went on to explain that she tries to relate her lectures in class to things that happen commonly in life and in some cases in her work in the field.

Many of Judy Gette's examples that she uses in class come from her personal experiences outside of her work. I wanted to shift the interview to her personal life, so I asked her what it is that she does for fun. "I like to read," she said, "I'm reading about fifteen books right now…it's a way to keep my brain nimble." She went on to say that she exercises, is a member of more than one book club, and is a lover of good wine. I asked about her family life and Judy exclaimed "I have three teenagers at home: fifteen, sixteen and eighteen." She opened up to me and told stories of her daughters and of her husband trying to finish building their house. When I asked her what she thinks of the renovations to the house she explained, "I have no part in it or a vision on how it is supposed to look…which helps because you don't fight about it."

Later in the interview, I asked her what would be her message to the students at Mat-Su College. She expressed that she believes that all students should be lifelong learners. Gette added that she still learns something new; even now that she is a teacher. She also believes that "failure is impossible", which is a quote that she has grown fond of over the years.

Judy Gette has made a difference in a lot people's lives. She is not only a great professor who makes psychology and learning fun again, but she is an active participant in her community. I believe that one must contain a great balancing act within themselves to be not only a wonderful and knowledgeable teacher, but also an advocate for those who need a voice most within our community. I, myself, as I am sure the rest of Mat-Su College, thank Judy Gette, for her devotion in teaching at our school as well as in our community.

Retirement Topics Workshops

Mat-Su College Public Square

All workshops will take place in the campus Wake-up Call Café, 6:30-8:00 P.M.

Feb 3 - Tax Issues in Retirement: Swalling and Associates, CPAs. Discussion includes when to begin IRA distributions, RMDs (required distributions from IRA, etc), and estate tax issues.

Feb 10 - Social Security: Robin Schmidt, Public Affairs with Social Security. Discussion of the myriad of Social Security issues retirees face, including options for applying, why wait, survivor benefits, spousal benefits, etc.

Feb 17 - Medical Issues: Mary Mundell, Susitna, Professional Pharmacy. Discussion of the important issues regarding medications, prescriptions, health options for medications, and financial concerns.

Feb 24 - Estate Planning : Ken Robertson, Robertson Law Offices. Discussion of estate planning issues, the importance and potential need for a revocable trust, and other significant legal issues facing retirees.

March 3 - Care Connections: Lourdette Diamond Neuberg, licensed clinical social worker. Discussion of Medicare/Medicaid and options for extended medical care.

Mar 10 - Investing In and For Retirement: John Warner, Edward Jones Investments. Discussion includes general information about stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Will also touch briefly on tax efficiency and generational wealth transfer.

Spring 2010 Semester Begins January 11

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Lions Club: A closer look

By Cheryl L Page
President of Mat-Su Campus Lions Club

Have you heard the subtle roars in the hallways of Mat-Su College lately? Do you know what it is all about? The Mat-Su Campus Lions Club was inducted into the International Association of Lions Club on April 19, 2009. We, the Mat-Su Campus Lions Club would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the Palmer Lions Club and all the other lion clubs that helped us to become the first campus lions club in the state of Alaska. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Mat-Su College for allowing us the space and room to serve within their walls. Our club meets on the second and fourth Thursdays' of every month at noon and is open to anyone. Our first service project was to collect stuffed animals for the State Troopers for the children they serve. The Troopers joined us at our induction and collect a very full basket.

Within one month's time our basket was full again; even without the basket being out. This full basket was graciously picked up by the Deputy Chief of Wasilla Police Department. On Wednesday, October 21 our third full baskets of stuffed animals, 92 of them, was donated to Mat-Su College's new Paramedic department. We want to thank all of you who have assisted and donated stuffed animals for this cause and any other worthy causes that we may embark upon. We have collected and donated 62 pair of eye glasses; with twelve of them being from my father. Sight is one of the main focuses of Lions Club International.

Mat-Su Campus Lions Club has also provided a Math Reference book to our community libraries as well as to others in our community who wanted a copy. This reference book was created to bridge the gap that was seen with our college students' coming in to take a math course. The goal of this resource tool is to help student get over their fear of math while embracing humor.

Mat-Su Campus Lions Club is teaming up with the Math Club, Student Government and the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) to provide Thanksgiving Baskets to our families in need this year. We have raised $127.00 in our first bake sale. This money was raised to help with this project. Mat-Su College, the Math Club and the Student Government have been providing Thanksgiving Baskets for our families in need for the past 15 years and is a project very close to my heart. Our efforts are to assist our families with food to fix a thanksgiving dinner for their families and to make their lives a little bit easier during this holiday season. The baskets are scheduled to be delivered on November 23 and 24, 2009. The Mat-Su Campus Lions Club motto is to serve. If you have a project or are interested in learning more about the lions, please do not hesitate to contact us. The Lions would also like to extend our appreciation to the Monitor for allowing us to share what we are all about.

Vet assistant program Continued from cover

By Linda Cordle
Special to the Mat-Su Monitor

The classes wrap up with a practicum where the student gets hands-on involvement at a vet clinic, dairy farm, musher's lot or some other animal needs setting. The location for the practicum is chosen by the instructors and the student with the student's interests in mind. Hopefully, the practicum will quickly lead to that dream job for the student in the animal medical field.

Serving on the Steering Committee for the Vet Assistant Certificate were Kristin Owens, MSC Assistant Director, Connie Fuess, MSC Assistant Professor, Dan Mielke, MSC Assistant Professor, MSC instructors and doctors of Veterinarian Medicine: Dr. Karen Carpenter, Assistant Professor and instructor Dr. Susan Whiton of the Country Vet, and instructor Dr. Sandi Farris of Harmony Vet Services. Licensed Veterinarian Technicians Jan Bullock, an Iditarod volunteer, Jane Crupi and Linda Klim both from the Pet Shop Vet Clinic were also involved on the Steering Committee.

Art showcase

Mat-Su College students are busy at work making their newest creations. DJ (right) is a metal smith student busy at work in Casey Apling's class. (Below) Apling and students are in Beginning metal smith class which meets on Fridays from noon till 5:30.

A mask designed by Barbara Peters from Suzanne Bach's Color Design Class.

(right) Grant Olson who teaches Humanities on Saturdays has visiting musician group called "Flat Baroque" play recorders for the class. Recorders are one of the oldest forms of musical instruments and were popular during the Renaissance Period dating back to 1500.

The Grape Tap

The Valley's Chic Restaurant & Wine Cellar By: Jane Deuster
Special to the Mat-Su Monitor

A connoisseur of food and wine would not expect to find "chic" in Wasilla, but a visit to The Grape Tap would dispel this absurd notion. A jewel of a find, this quaint yet modern Tapas restaurant redefines the culinary status of Wasilla, satisfying the palate of even the most discerning individual. I celebrated my birthday at this new restaurant and wine cellar, and I was not disappointed. The moment I stepped into this quaint yellow building, I felt welcomed by the warmth of décor, the sensory delights of smells wafting from the kitchen, and the quiet murmur of friends sharing an evening together. The service was impeccable, the wine trio sampler perfect, and our server suggested menu items that were spot on. The Grape Tap opened in June 2009 and is owned and operated by Kelci and Skip Hatcher.

Tapas originated in rural Spanish taverns and is best defined as a style of eating, bringing people together and encouraging conversation. A tapas patron is expected to linger and enjoy this culinary experience, to escape the hustle bustle of life and bask among friends and family. Rules for entering The Grape Tap, breath, relax, enjoy. A wide assortment of small portions is served ala carte and shared with fellow diners. Connoisseurs of wine and beer will enjoy many varieties offered, and for those of us who need a little help, your server will happily assist you in choosing just the right one to accompany your menu item and excite your palette.

Chef Pat Mathias is the mastermind behind the delicious menu creations offered at The Grape Tap. Some of these menu items include bacon wrapped dates stuffed with chevre cheese, Blue Cheese Chips, baked Maryland blue crab with creamy brie and artichoke hearts with warm French baguettes, The Weekly Cheese Flight (a platter of three distinct cheeses served with marmalade, house spiced nuts, and French baguette, The Amontillado (a sampling of cured meats, fine cheeses, imported mustard, and marinated olives,, Chicken Satay Skewers, The Turner Hall (a selection of savory grilled sausages), Seared Ahi, Thai Tofu, Pork Sliders, and exotic pizzas, just to name a few. There's only one problem: the delicious choices weaken ones resolve to set portion limits, but this is easily resolved by planning subsequent visits to The Grape Tap to sample all their menu items.

Chelsi and Skip have taken courses at The Culinary Institute of America in Napa, California and are pleased to serve 20-25 varieties of wine by the glass, 6 craft beers, 16 Belgian-style beers, and 3 Champagne Cocktails at The Grape Tap. Live Music is occasionally provided, but patrons will surely enjoy the sound of tasteful music anytime they dine. Table sitting capacity is 66 and they do host specialty group parties in the wine cellar area which accommodates up to 25 people. There is also a reserve room which accommodates up to 10 private dinners. All you needs will be met through their impeccable service of 10 employees.

Inspiration for opening a Tapas bar in Wasilla came from Skip and Kelci's traveling experiences "…and exposure to places where delicious food and unique wines are enjoyed in a comfortable and inviting atmosphere. We are very excited and passionate about having a place in our community where people can gather to share their time and exchange enjoyable experiences over creative food, unique wines, and tasty craft beers. "True to their ideals and love of community; they have hosted wine tasting benefits for Habitat for Humanity and Valley Community Recycling, and they regularly donate 1% of the restaurant profits to local charities.

The Grape Tap is located on 322 N. Boundary Street in Wasilla and hours are Tuesday through Thursday 5 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday & Saturdays from 5:00 to 11:00. For more information or reservations, call them at 907.376.VINO (8466). Shed the business of life from your shoulders for a bit and spend some quality time with friends or family, visit The Grape Tap and treat yourselves to a little bit of wonderful right here in the Valley.

Mat-Su College Art Club

Team Art is alive and well with an average of eight members attending meetings alternating on Monday and Friday at 4:00 every other week. Officers and committee chairs are as follows:

Dawn Adamson, President
Denise Reeve, Vice President
Kari Peters, Secretary
Joey Brockhouse, Treasurer
Felicia Day, Student Government Rep
Emily Gelino-Bequette, Display Window Coordinator

JOIN ART CLUB

All students are welcome to join the club. You do not have to be currently enrolled in art.

For more information contact Denise Reeve at 357-0022

Christmas Poster Finalists

A Christmas poster contest was held at Mat-Su college, and these are the finalists.

Halloween costume competition winner is...

Our very own Susan Bach! OctoMom was awarded Best Costume in the Halloween Competition. To see Bach without costume stop by her office at FSM210.

SOPHIA'S KAFENEO

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